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for February 14, 2014

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Climate Change

'Unclear' Whether Flood Insurance Reforms Will Reduce Fiscal Risks, GAO Says

Steps have been taken to reform a federally run flood insurance program, but it is still "unclear" whether the changes will reduce the program's fiscal risks, a Government Accountability Office official said Feb. 12....

Climate Change

Task Force Members Share Experiences, Solutions on Drought, Floods, Wildfires

State, local and tribal leaders from around the country shared experiences in dealing with extreme weather events, flooding, wildfires and droughts at a meeting of the Obama administration's Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience...

Energy

Interior Plans Two Lease Auctions in March For Oil, Gas Exploration in Gulf of Mexico

The Interior Department will offer more than 40 million acres in March for oil and gas exploration in the Gulf of Mexico, the department announced Feb. 13....

Insurance

Insurer Owes \$19 Million for Katrina Cleanup; Discharge Sudden, Accidental

A sudden and accidental exception to a pollution exclusion provision is triggered by the initial discharge, regardless of the later discovery of additional contamination, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas has ruled,...

Mining

Canada Proposes to Continue Tax Credits For Mineral Exploration, Budget Reveals

The 2014 federal budget plan for Canada proposes to extend a 15 percent mineral exploration tax credit for flow-through share investors for an additional year....

Oil Spills

Strict Limits on Work Product Protection Affirmed in Three Rulings Against Chevron

Three recent federal circuit rulings stemming from claims by Ecuadorian plaintiffs against Chevron Corp. over contamination in Ecuador make clear that the 2010 expert witness amendments to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure provide work...

Water Pollution

N.C. Agency Regulating Duke Energy Is Subject of Criminal Probe After Ash Spill

Federal prosecutors have launched a criminal investigation into the state's oversight of Duke Energy and its response to a recent coal ash spill in North Carolina....

Water Pollution

Supreme Court Extends Deadline in Wisconsin Case

The U.S. Supreme Court on Feb. 12 extended the deadline to March 20 for the U.S. to file its response to a Wisconsin village's petition for a writ of certiorari (Vill. of Hobart v. Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, U.S., No. 13-847, 1/15/14;...

Water Resources

Administration Ready to Work With State, Local Agencies on Climate Adaptation Issues

The Obama administration is committed to working with state and local agencies to implement strategies to guard against climate change effects such as extreme weather,

drought, sea level rise, flooding and wildfires, Mike Boots, chief of...

Wetlands

Farmers Who Till Wetlands Remain Eligible For Subsidies if They Mitigate Losses

The recently enacted farm bill will allow farmers who cultivate sensitive wetlands to receive crop insurance subsidies as long as they mitigate and compensate for the loss of the wetlands....



EPA Sets April Target For Cooling Water Rule Largely Affecting Older Plants

EPA and environmentalists have agreed to an April 17 deadline for the agency to promulgate its long-awaited rule governing cooling water intakes at power plants, a rule that new Energy Information Administration (EIA) data show could have a disproportionate effect on older plants because most newer plants would meet the rule's fish safety requirements with recirculating cooling systems they have already installed.

EPA Targets Major Headquarters Program Offices In Staff Buyout Packages

EPA is targeting key headquarters program office positions in its push for staff buyouts that could save millions of dollars due to shrinking budgets, offering buyout packages in the toxics, water, enforcement and other offices that could exacerbate union officials' fear that the buyout will hinder EPA's ability to enforce environmental laws.

EPA Urged To Overhaul Enforcement Strategy After FY13 Results Decrease

EPA is facing calls to overhaul its enforcement strategy after showing fiscal year 2013 drops in inspections, cases and other enforcement metrics, with environmentalists saying the results show a need to divert shrinking funding to the enforcement program while conservatives say EPA should be focusing on the largest alleged violators.

Critics Push Back Against EPA Plans For 'Next Generation' Enforcement

EPA's plan for a "next generation" compliance initiative that would focus more on data reporting than field inspections to guide enforcement priorities is prompting push-back from advocates who say it will allow polluters to escape penalties, and conservatives who fear it could create new burdens for smaller businesses.

States See Varied Effects From EPA Tanks Funding Cuts, Allocation Changes

The funding cut to EPA's leaking underground storage tank (LUST) trust fund program contained in the recently enacted fiscal year 2014 omnibus appropriations bill will likely have varying effects on states' UST cleanups and leak prevention efforts, with some state sources expecting little change and others saying it could make things more difficult.



POLITICS:

Spill that fouled water supplies seen as 'game changer' for embattled W.Va. greens

Jason Plautz, E&E reporter

Published: Thursday, February 13, 2014

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- After living most of her 71 years in Institute, a community 9 miles west of here, Sue Davis knows danger's part of life for people living in the shadow of chemical manufacturers. She's had her house rocked by a plant explosion, seen frightened neighbors move away and felt so nauseated from fumes she couldn't think straight.

But the spill of a coal-scrubbing chemical into the Elk River last month was a whole different matter, she said. The disaster left 300,000 people in nine counties -- including Kanawha, which houses Charleston, the state capital -- without tap water for days and drew an unusually swift, strong government response.

"We've got more action with this one," Davis said in an interview. "I think they learned that chemicals don't discriminate. Now they know chemicals can affect everyone. If they had listened to us in the past, I don't think we'd be going through what we're going through today."

Davis spoke Monday after a field hearing here of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. In a sign that Congress and state legislators are paying attention, lawmakers at both levels wrote bills to expand oversight of chemical facilities like the Freedom Industries Inc. plant that put 10,000 gallons of MCHM into the Elk River.

And West Virginia environmental and public health activists suddenly find themselves being heeded.

Being without safe tap water may have turned a tide in a state famous for its embrace of heavy industry and distrust of regulators and regulations, said Angie Rosser, executive director of the West Virginia Rivers Coalition.

"There's been an awakening," Rosser said. "We're talking to people who would never identify with us before. I think there's a reassessment in terms of how we value water and the environment versus industry interests."

More than a month after the Jan. 9 spill, people whose tap water is drawn from the Elk River say they can still smell MCHM's licorice odor in their kitchens and showers. There are lingering questions about the chemical's health effects given the lack of toxicological data from government regulators.

And then Tuesday, a coal slurry spewed 100,000 gallons of dirty water into a creek south of Charleston; Patriot Coal Corp. says levels of MCHM were likely low at the slurry spill ([*Greenwire*](#), Feb. 12).

Worries about the Freedom Industries spill won't go away. Restaurants are still advertising that they use bottled water, and many West Virginians say they're avoiding warm showers because the heat makes the odor worse. To get clean, some use baby wipes.

West Virginia is not a state known for its regulatory enthusiasm. Even Democrats make political hay by bashing U.S. EPA and other agencies for what they say is overzealous and intrusive oversight.

But with a sixth of all West Virginians affected by the chemical spill, environmentalists say attitudes may be changing.

"People are thinking of this as less of a water crisis, but as an issue about how clean our water always is," said Bill Price of the local Sierra Club chapter. "I've been here 13 years, and I'm seeing more talk about this than ever before. This could be a game changer."

Chemical industrial disasters aren't unusual in West Virginia.

The state's so-called Chemical Valley has seen its share of fatal and nonfatal accidents,

including a 2008 explosion at a Bayer CropScience plant that killed two workers. And in 1984, thousands of villagers were killed in Bhopal, India, when a plant owned by West Virginia-based Union Carbide Corp. released methyl isocyanate (MIC). The company's Institute, W.Va., plant was the only U.S. source of MIC until it dismantled the production unit in 2008 in a settlement with Institute residents.

A plant worker was also poisoned at a DuPont Co. facility in 2010, prompting the U.S. Chemical Safety Board to issue a series of recommendations for new regulations. But those regulations never made it through the Legislature as lawmakers cited funding problems.

CSB Chairman Rafael Moure-Eraso has said those regulations could have averted last month's Elk River spill.

"The CSB's previous recommendations aimed at empowering a government agency to determine just what posed a high hazard," Moure-Eraso at the House field hearing. "Perhaps qualified inspectors would have considered aging chemical storage tanks, located just upstream from a public drinking water treatment plant, to be potentially 'highly hazardous' and worthy of a closer look."

'This is your year'

In a basement of a Charleston church Monday, roughly 25 environmentalists, citizen watchdogs, church activists and utility workers plotted a calendar of protests and lobbying activities, including the state's annual environmental day next week.

And some activists have volunteered to train citizens to lobby legislators.

Monday's was the fourth meeting of the informal network and a sign of just how much the spill has riled the community, West Virginia Environmental Council legislative coordinator Don Garvin said.

"This has brought some relationships that were just never forged beforehand," he said. "I'm not sure how we keep this going, but I'm happy that we have people who wouldn't normally do this. I'm grateful that all of these groups are finally getting together to benefit the whole movement."

Last weekend, a march organized by environmentalists to the headquarters of the utility West Virginia American Water drew more than 150 people, despite frigid temperatures and icy roads. Price said that before the spill, rallies might draw 50 or so people, even in pleasant weather.

The water rally also drew the NAACP, not a traditional ally for state environmental groups, although the national office has partnered with the Sierra Club and others

recently.

But environmentalists themselves question how much staying power the movement will have.

Garvin, who has lobbied the state Legislature for decades, said there have been victories in the past. A big win, he said, was getting the Legislature recently to drop coal-industry-backed efforts to weaken water quality standards for aluminum, which were approved by a Senate committee the same day it started considering a spill response bill.

And recommendations for how to tighten regulations after the spill are being heard by state Democrats as the House looks at tweaking a Senate-passed bill.

But those wins aren't necessarily lasting ones, since bills can always be rewritten or regulations reviewed. But with the attention of the Statehouse, Garvin said, a progressive coalition could make some inroads.

"There was no focus to this term, but now it's water," Garvin said. "I've had lots of people tell me, 'This is your year.'"

'Standing against a flood'

West Virginia politicians may be changing direction in the aftermath of the spill. Consider the comments made by Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), a longtime friend of the coal industry.

"Industry has long resisted new regulations or stronger enforcement measures," he said in a statement Monday. "It is short-sighted to think that last month's spill is an isolated incident in West Virginia. And it is short-sighted to think that proper regulations would in any way stifle business -- the contrary is true."

Rockefeller is retiring at the end of his term in 2014 and has more cover to speak out. But West Virginia's junior senator, Democrat Joe Manchin, has also come out for legislation tightening standards on aboveground chemical storage facilities and has spoken about the need for more regulations, although he has worked to separate the spill from the coal industry.

Rep. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) has followed suit with a House bill, but it's unclear how much momentum that will have.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin (D) said days after the spill that he would work on a bill to regulate the chemical industry, which was introduced and passed the state Senate unanimously just weeks later.

The bill has now gone to the House, where green groups are pushing to close loopholes and tighten the language before it reaches the floor.

Joe Lopez, a state energy official, said it's rare to see the Legislature move so swiftly.

"What this tells you is that you're standing against a flood," Lopez said. "This is getting to be like baseball. Who the hell is against baseball? Well, now who's against clean water? Nobody in this bunch is going to put themselves out there."

Lopez said he's not sure when he'd be comfortable with his pregnant daughter drinking from the tap. He's worried she might leave with his three grandchildren because of the spill.

"This has really gotten to a high level of concern and a high level of exposure," Lopez said. "Two or three years ago, you couldn't have this kind of movement."

Still, green groups were locked out of some negotiations on the bill, including a stakeholder meeting between Tomblin and key senators that included only industry groups.

Kevin DiGregorio, president of the Chemical Alliance Zone, said that the political and social impact has been so different on this spill because it happened "outside the fence" of factories and mines and hit people in their homes. He's been working to calm the public and says the perception of the industry shouldn't change.

"Long term, people will realize this industry is really safe despite the one incident," said DiGregorio, whose group is a public-private partnership designed to attract chemical companies to and keep existing companies in West Virginia.

"When I was at a trade show a week after the spill, a lot of people said they were sorry, and the few who had negative things to say would still talk to us," he said. "The people making the investments know this was a single incident and doesn't represent the whole industry."

But, he acknowledged, the spill could have an impact if strong regulations move quickly without a thought to consequences. While DiGregorio doesn't lobby on regulations, he said he had seen the bill and wanted to make sure a response was done "in a smart way," especially as more chemical companies were returning to the state to take advantage of the resources from the Marcellus Shale field.

"I think we need to do something to better manage these situations, but a lot of facilities this bill could cover are already regulated," he said. "You don't want anything that will drive away companies instead of bringing them in. If West Virginia's the only state where you have to open a tank every month or two to look at it, then West Virginia is going to be the only state without that industry."

'This is a new day'

But citizen activists are starting to look beyond immediate regulations to see how they can make lasting changes. One of the final items considered at the informal church-basement meeting was about long-term goals, and members kicked around ways to keep in touch after the fury over the spill dies.

Gary Zuckett, president of West Virginia Citizen Action Group, said he's working on how to move "from the personal to the political" and how to get "300,000 pissed-off citizens" on the same page.

That coordination, the Sierra Club's Price said, could mean long-term political changes.

"This is a new day. I'm not sure a \$10,000 check from the West Virginia Coal Association is going to outweigh the 10,000 votes for someone who's actually trying to solve this problem," Price said. "That's what people are clamoring for now."

DROUGHT:

Recent rains provide minimal relief in Calif.

Annie Snider, E&E reporter

Published: Thursday, February 13, 2014

The first significant storm of the wet season provided some relief to parched Central California this week, but the region still needs three or more such storms to come back to normal, according to this week's [U.S. Drought Monitor](#).

The rain helped to downgrade about 6 percent of the state from the extreme drought category to severe drought. Nearly 10 percent of the state remains in the worst category, exceptional drought, though.

"Although there were short-term local improvements from this week's ample precipitation, the long stretch of subnormal precipitation dating back to 2011-12 wet

season has accumulated large deficits, leaving rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and snow packs well below normal," states the report accompanying this week's drought map, which was released this morning.

The Folsom Reservoir east of Sacramento, part of the Central Valley project that provides water to homes, industry and farms across a broad swath of the state, was the big winner from the week's rains, doubling its storage. But it would need to double again in order to get back to normal, according to the report.

Little precipitation, if any, fell on Southern California and the Southwest.

ENDANGERED SPECIES:

Threatened mouse delays Colo. flood rebuild

Published: Thursday, February 13, 2014

The only thing standing between Colorado and extensive flood recovery is a tiny mouse with kangaroo-proportioned feet.

The Preble's meadow jumping mouse, considered a threatened species, maintains one of its few habitats in Colorado. Under the Endangered Species Act, any construction project in its habitat would have to go through a lengthy review to ensure the species' safety, and those reviews are now being brought to bear on the second phase of repairs from the devastating floods that hit the state in September 2013.

The first phase of repairs was expedited in the immediate aftermath of the floods, but now reconstruction is likely to slow down, and some area officials are concerned that repairs won't be completed before the spring runoff.

Susan Linner, a Colorado official for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said she expected the reviews to be completed quickly. The agency said only five permanent reconstruction projects in the flood zone have needed reviews so far, and all were completed quickly. Still, there may be longer reviews for major road and highway rebuilds (Allison Sherry, *Denver Post*, Feb. 12). -- **HG**

COAL ASH:

Feds launch criminal investigation into N.C. spill

Manuel Quiñones, E&E reporter

Published: Thursday, February 13, 2014

Federal prosecutors have opened a criminal investigation into the coal ash spill last week from a Duke Energy Corp. power plant into the Dan River in northern North Carolina.

The U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina has subpoenaed the state's Department of Environment and Natural Resources to appear before a grand jury next month.

The U.S. attorney's office is asking for documents related to the spill, caused by a broken stormwater pipe under an ash dump associated with Duke's retired Dan River coal-fired power plant, according to documents obtained by *Greenwire*.

The U.S. attorney's office is also asking for documents related to the state's oversight of the power plant's ash ponds and any pollution problems dating back to 2010, the documents show.

Drew Elliot, the state agency's communications director, said in a statement this morning, "The Department of Environment and Natural Resources will cooperate in this matter."

The U.S. Attorney's office has also issued a subpoena to Duke Energy Corp., the company said. Spokesman Thomas Williams said, "Duke Energy will continue to cooperate with any state or federal agency that might undertake an investigation of the Dan River ash release."

U.S. attorney Thomas Walker is not providing details of his actions. "We cannot confirm or deny the existence of any ongoing investigation," he said.

This morning, Duke announced an unpermitted release of treated wastewater also at the Dan River power plant. It did not contain coal residuals, the company said.

MINING:

Landowners ask Supreme Court to block Mich. mine

Manuel Quiñones, E&E reporter

Published: Thursday, February 13, 2014

The Huron Mountain Club, a group of landowners in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, is asking the U.S. Supreme Court to halt development of a nickel and copper mine near Lake Superior.

Last year, a three-judge panel of the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals denied the group an injunction against Lundin Mining Corp.'s Eagle Mine, formerly owned by mining giant Rio Tinto PLC.

At issue is whether the Army Corps of Engineers needs to issue a permit for the mine under the Clean Water Act and the Rivers and Harbors Act. The project is proceeding under a state metals mining approval.

Justice Department attorneys, representing the Army Corps, wrote in documents that current law "places no mandatory duty on the Corps to affirmatively demand permit applications from project proponents."

And the appeals court judges said landowners were unlikely to succeed in their litigation. "It is clear from the text of the CWA that Congress did not contemplate placing the burden on the agency to initiate the permit process, but rather to process permit applications once filed," their opinion last November said.

Late last month, the Huron Mountain Club filed a request for Supreme Court review of their desire for an injunction against the mine while their litigation is ongoing.

Mine spokesman Dan Blondeau this morning said, "We are committed to protecting the environment and maximizing the benefits of our presence for the local community."

"Eagle's permits underwent extensive state and federal regulatory agency reviews and were affirmed by state courts in response to multiple legal challenges by the Huron

Mountain Club," he added.

Justice Department attorneys asked the appeals court to formally publish its opinion to create legal precedent. Judges denied that request.

WATER POLLUTION:

N.C. warns residents against eating fish from spill site

Published: Thursday, February 13, 2014

People should not eat fish caught near the location of a recent coal ash spill on North Carolina's Dan River, according to the state's Department of Health and Human Services.

The department said it would collect and evaluate samples taken from downstream of the spill.

Last week, a 27-acre Duke Energy Corp. coal ash pond leaked as much as 82,000 tons of coal ash and 27 million gallons of contaminated water into the river ([AP/New York Times](#), Feb. 12). -- **WW**

COLORADO:

Lawmakers walk out of meeting on water rights

Published: Thursday, February 13, 2014

A dispute over Colorado's water policy yesterday caused three state lawmakers to walk out of a meeting with local environmental leaders.

The Republican lawmakers walked out as officials from the state Department of Natural Resources and the Colorado Water Conservation Board listed their concerns with a proposed bill that would give the state Legislature veto power over Gov. John Hickenlooper's (D) water plan for urban and rural areas.

"I don't like being lectured or dictated to," said state Rep. Don Coram (R), who attended the meeting.

Colorado Water Conservation Board Director James Eklund acknowledged that he got "a little hot, maybe too hot" at the meeting. Eklund said he was trying to explain his opposition to the bill, which he said would take power away from round-table groups that oversee the state's nine water basins.

"I'm passionate about this because it's important that we honor the work of these basin round tables," Eklund said.

Colorado is one of several Western states facing severe droughts. The bill is scheduled for a hearing before the state Senate Agriculture, Natural Resources & Energy Committee later today (Lynn Bartels, [*Denver Post*](#), Feb. 12). -- **DB**

KENTUCKY:

Sinkhole swallows 8 vintage Corvettes

Published: Thursday, February 13, 2014

Some of the most prized vintage Chevrolet Corvettes were swallowed by a 40-foot sinkhole that opened beneath the National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green, Ky., yesterday

Museum officials were working to retrieve the damaged vehicles.

Eight collector cars tumbled into the sinkhole, including the 1 millionth Corvette that General Motors manufactured -- a 1993 ZR-1 Spyder produced in 1992 -- and a 2009 ZR1 "Blue Devil" that was on loan to the museum from the automaker.

"It seems almost Biblical, in a way, to have the ground open up and swallow the cream of the collection of the museum," said Corvette historian Jerry Burton. "What are the odds?"

No one was injured, although museum officials said the vehicles were worth millions of dollars. The Bowling Green region is known for its caverns, but city hydrologist Tim Slattery said the museum followed proper construction procedures. He cautioned that sinkholes can develop over time.

Museum officials said the facility will reopen today, but the room where the accident occurred will be closed off (Tim Ghianni, [Reuters](#), Feb. 12). -- **SP**

JAPAN:

TEPCO took months to report high strontium levels

Published: Thursday, February 13, 2014

The operator of the earthquake- and tsunami-damaged nuclear power plant in Japan's Fukushima prefecture took five months to report high levels of a dangerous isotope in groundwater, a regulatory official said.

Tokyo Electric Power Co. announced yesterday that it found 5 million becquerels per liter of radioactive strontium-90 in a sample taken from a well 25 meters from the ocean in September. The test registered five times higher than the broader all-beta radiation reading taken two months earlier.

The utility said it was unsure about the accuracy of the reading and decided to re-examine the data. Meanwhile, Shinji Kinjo, who leads the Nuclear Regulation Authority task force on contaminated water issues at the Fukushima Daiichi plant, said he was unaware of the record reading until this month.

"We did not hear about this figure when they detected it last September," he said. "We have been repeatedly pushing TEPCO to release strontium data since November. It should not take them this long to release this information."

Strontium-90 can be twice as harmful to humans as the radioactive material cesium-137.

TEPCO has been criticized for its response to the meltdowns at the Fukushima Daiichi plant in 2011 and the subsequent cleanup (Mari Saito, [Reuters](#), Feb. 13). -- **WW**

ClimateWire -- Fri., February 14, 2014 -- [Read the full edition](#)

1. RESEARCH: EPA has underestimated methane emissions, including those from gas leaks -- study

In recent years, as the natural gas boom has led to the fuel playing an increasing role in the U.S. energy mix, a debate has been raging over its climate benefits.

TODAY'S STORIES

2. WEATHER: Powerful storm creates 4 days of disruptions moving up East Coast

3. DROUGHT: Obama to announce millions for drought-stricken livestock farmers

4. ADAPTATION: Obama and Calif. officials confer on local ways to prevent 'tsunami of climate change'

5. NATIONS: Kerry's Asia agenda highlights climate change talks

6. RENEWABLE ENERGY: States with greater 'wind penetration' see lower electricity rates -- analysis

7. DROUGHT: Experts warn that Calif.'s groundwater supply is being pushed toward rock bottom

8. SCIENCE: Arctic warming may be driving new parasite infections

9. FINANCE: Church of England battles 'great demon of our day,' climate change

10. NATIONS: Canada might not regulate oil and gas emissions without U.S. cooperation

11. PUBLIC HEALTH: Extreme weather changes could increase stroke risk

12. STATES: Kan. House ponders resolution against Obama's climate change plan

EnergyWire -- Fri., February 14, 2014 -- [Read the full edition](#)

1. TRANSMISSION: 'Very real' tension between grid operators, state regulators on display in Ark. siting case

For almost a year, a utility's plans to build a 50-mile transmission line that would cut a 150-foot-wide swath through the scenic Ozark Mountains has roiled northwest Arkansas. But the dispute over the siting of the \$123 million high-voltage line, requested by the region's grid operator to bolster reliability and avoid potential outages, has become supercharged in the weeks since an Arkansas judge selected a route that cuts through neighboring Missouri.

2. CLIMATE: Wide-ranging review sees much higher methane leakage from natural gas operations

Natural gas operations are leaking more of a potent greenhouse gas than previously assumed, but even so, the fossil fuel is better than coal for the climate, according to a comprehensive new study.

ELECTRIC UTILITIES

3. POWER MARKETS: Electricity producer sees 'era of volatility' ahead

4. GRID: Utility operators and regulators get to war game a risk-filled future

5. UTILITIES: TVA board OKs 2 new nuclear contracts

OIL, GAS AND COAL

6. ARCTIC: Anxiety grows over costs, risks of far-north projects

7. PRODUCTION: Oil prices are key to long-term crude and shale gas output -- study

8. FINANCE: Energy M&A to pick up after slowing in 2013

9. GAS EXPORTS: FERC sets timeline for Corpus Christi project permit

10. TRANSPORT: 'Planets aligned' to prevent disaster in Pa. oil-train derailment

11. BUSINESS: Oil boom means 'it is a very good time to be an energy lawyer in Texas'

12. FINANCE: Utilities get boost from investors, stock market

13. NATIONS: Oil one of the few things propping up Venezuela's teetering economy

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